NOVACON 28

Progress Report 4

NOVACON 28

Date: 13-15 November 1998.
Venue: The Britannia Hotel, New Street, Birmingham.
Guest of Honour: Paul J McAuley.

Membership & Enquiries: Attending membership costs £35.00 on the door for full membership, or £10.00 for Friday and £15.00 each for Saturday and Sunday. Further information is available from Carol Morton at the address below.

Room Rates: £35.00 per person per night for people sharing twin/double rooms, £30.00 pppn for those sharing a triple room and £40.00 pppn for single rooms (inclusive of full English breakfast). NB: The deadline for bookings will have passed by the time you received this. This means that the Britannia are already accepting bookings from the general public and we can no longer guarantee you a room. However Carol Morton will process Hotel booking forms, with deposits of £20.00 per person, she receives by 7th November 1998 - as there are currently a number of rooms available we hope to be able to fit late bookings in. Cheques for room deposits should be made payable to "The Britannia Hotel". Enquires regarding hotel bookings should be sent to Carol at the address above or you can call her on 01384 825386 (before 9pm).

Advertising Rates: Advertising is welcome for the first Progress Report of Novacon 29 and for the Programme Book of Novacon 28. The rates are as follows (fan rates in brackets): Progress Report: Professional £25.00 (£13.00) full page, £14.50 (£8.00) half page, £8.50 (£5.00) quarter page; Programme Book: Professional £60.00 (£31.00) full page, £32.00 (£15.50) half page, £18.00 (£9.50) quarter page. Anyone interested in advertising should contact Martin Tudor at 24 Ravensbourne Grove, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX (e-mail martin@empties.demon.co.uk). Deadlines for camera-ready advertising copy are detailed below.

Deadlines: Novacon 28 Programme Book: 7th November 1998, distributed at Novacon 28. Novacon 29's Progress Report #1: 9th November 1998, distributed at Novacon 28.

Committee: Martin Tudor (Chair & Publications), 24 Ravensbourne Grove, (off Clarkes Lane,) Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX (e-mail martin@empties.demon.co.uk); Steve Lawson, 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ (tel: 0114 281 1572, e-mail dream@net comuk.co.uk); Carol Morton (Hotel Liaison) and Tony Morton (Treasurer), 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8SS, (tel: 01384-825386 - before 9pm or e-mail morton@cableinet.co.uk); Pat McMurray (Programme), 28 Plaistow Grove, Bromley, Kent, BR1 3PB e-mail pat@cooky.demon.co.uk); Chris Murphy (Operations), 126 McKean Road, Oldbury, B69 4BA, (e-mail CSHM@compuserve.com).

Acknowledgements: Tony Berry, Helena Bowles, Steve Lawson, Pat McMurray, Carol Morton and Chris Murphy for their contributions and Dave Mooring for his splendid cover artwork. All uncredited contributions have been written by Martin Tudor. This Progress Report was printed on the CRITICAL WAVE photocopier, contact Martin Tudor at the above address for details of WAVE's competitive prices.

CHAIRMAN'S BIT by Martin Tudor

On arrival at the Convention first register with the Hotel (if you've booked a room) and then go to the second floor and collect your bag from the Novacon Registration Table at the door of the Lichfield Lounge/Ops Room. (Turn left as you come out of the lift and the Lichfield is first on your left.)

The Novacon Registration table will be open from 16.00-21.00 on Friday, 10.00-19.00 on Saturday and 10.00-14.00 on Sunday.

Once you have collected your convention pack from the Lichfield walk straight to the Malvern Bar and buy the nearest Committee member a drink - they'll need it and you'll make an instant friend!

As mentioned in the colophon the Britannia Hotel have recently released a further 25 single rooms (these have small double beds and were previously designated as doubles). You might just have time to get a room if you haven't done so already - contact Carol Morton to check (she can be reached at 14 Park Street, Lye, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8SS; telephone enquiries, before 9pm, on 01384-825386, or e-mail morton@-cableinet.co.uk).

See you soon.

HOTEL LIAISON REPORT by Carol Morton

This is the last PR before the con, thus my last opportunity to harangue you.

I have had a concession from the hotel on the room bookings. As the deadline will have passed by the time you read this Progress Report, the Britannia have said that they will be selling rooms to the public from 1 November but will of course give priority to our membership. So if you have yet to book a room - THEN DO SO REAL SOON NOW.

As to the food prices, we think we have a very good deal from the hotel. The Convention Menu that will be available and sold in the restaurant and other areas as notified in the "Read Me Inside", will be priced between £1.50 and £3.50. The menus for the weekend will also be printed in the "Read Me Inside".

In addition the hotel has an excellent table d'hôte menu of which Birmingham-resident gourmet Rog Peyton said "I don't think I will be going out of the hotel to eat if that is an example of the menu", and it is reasonably priced at £14.50 for three courses. I can tell you the meals are excellent having eaten there twice. (The table d'hôte menu will be available 19.00-21.30 on Friday and Saturday. You should find booking forms detailing the menu in you convention pack on arrival. If not ask at either the Hotel Reception or at the Novacon Registration Table.)

Of more importance to many of our members is the beer prices. We have again negotiated a great deal. John Smith's Smooth Pour and Foster's lager will be sold at £1.50 per pint. The real ale we have arranged for the Britannia to supply for the weekend is Bombardier Premium Bitter and that will sell at £1.85 per pint. Beamish Black is also available at £2.10 per pint. Unfortunately the hotel cannot do draught cider, but will sell bottled cider, both sweet and dry, at £1.00 per bottle - sorry to the cider drinkers but we did try our best for you. As an added bonus the bars will be selling chocolate, Cadbury's as it is local but this will include Bournville for real chocolate lovers.

One last point. Badges. Although the hotel will be selling the bedrooms we are not using to the general public we have an agreement from them that any drinks for non-convention guests will have to be room service thus they won't be using "our" bars. However, as non-convention hotel guests will be using the restaurant - for the table d'hôte menu you MUST, MUST wear your convention badges at all times in the public and convention areas of the Britannia. If you do not you may be refused service in the bars and refused food from the Convention Menu. You WILL be challenged by our own security staff and prevented from entering the function spaces. I have given the hotel permission to challenge anyone in the hotel who is not wearing a badge, as to whether they are a member of the convention or not. Be warned and wear your badge.

Well that's about all I need to say, other than:

1. Get your hotel forms in NOW,
2. I am looking forward to seeing you all at the con,
3. When you get there - ENJOY YOURSELVES.

THE PROGRAMME by Pat McMurray

We've tried to leave the programme flexible enough so that you can attend lots of it and still eat, get a beer and hang out. Most programme items are 45 minutes long in one hour slots, thus giving you 15 whole minutes every hour of beer and toilet time! There are empty hour long slots at lunchtime and in the evening, and we hope you will shape your evening at least partially around the programme. For those of you who want music and action, discos and ceilidhs go on until late. For those of you who want conversation, the bars will be open!

A small prize will be given to the fan who spots the most film and TV references in this programme. If more than one fan wins, the small prize will be split into even smaller prizes! When you enter, include a list of the references.

(Please note that this programme may change slightly on the day. All events will be in the Gloucester Room on the 9th floor except where otherwise stated.)

FRIDAY

19:00 Opening Ceremony
Participants: Paul J McAuley, Martin Tudor & Committee
Meet our wonderful guest, our delightful committee and our reprehensible chairman.

19:10 Modern Space Opera
Participants: Paul J McAuley, Peter F Hamilton, John Meaney, Pat McMurray(Moderator)
It's back! It's bigger and better! It's British! Following two fallow decades for space opera, The Empire Strikes Back

20:00 Birmingham Science Fiction Group Meeting featuring Brian W Aldiss
Birmingham Science Fiction Group event to launch the second volume of Brian Aldiss's autobiography. Open to non-members of the BSFG (i.e. all members of Novacon!).

21:00 Dinner
Participants: Everybody
The Restaurant on the first floor - go eat, have a beer, hang out.

21:00 Brian W Aldiss Signing Session
Following his talk in the Gloucester, on the 9th floor, Brian Aldiss will move down to the Mezzanine where he will be signing copies

of the second volume of his autobiography, THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE: MY LIFE AS AN ENGLISHMAN (Little, Brown), in Harvey's.

22:00 To Hell With Burgundy
Described as "Fleetwood Mac meets the Pogues", To Hell With Burgundy are a folk rock band who played at Intuition the 1998 Eastercon in Manchester.

00:00 Ceilidh
Participants: The 2Kon committee and anyone else who wants to join in.
The 2000 Eastercon, 2Kon, provide the traditional celtic ceilidh.

SATURDAY

11:00 The Christmas Lectures: What Really Happened
Participant: Ian Stewart
Professor Ian Stewart, next year's Guest of Honour, talks about the experience of giving the Royal Institution Christmas Lectures.

12:00 Book Auction
Participants: Rog Peyton, 1/2r Cruttenden
Buy some books, sell some books.

13:00 Lunch
Participants: Everybody
The Restaurant on the first floor - have a sandwich, go shopping.

14:00 Guest of Honour Interview
Participants: Paul J McAuley, Pat Cadigan
Novacon 28's Guest of Honour is interviewed by Pat Cadigan

15:00 Blankety Blank
Participants: Bridget Bradshaw, Mike Siddall.
Another fun Blankety Blank, filled with wit, humour and Blankety Blank, presented by Bug. Sadly her Beautiful Assistant couldn't make it so we've got Mike Siddall instead.

16:00 Whatever happened to Bat Durston?
Participants: Julian Headlong, Peter Weston
Peter and Julian reminiscing about futures past, the science fictional present and the future of future future histories.

17:00 Reconvened Quiz
Participants: Gwen Funnell, Peter Wareham.
The 1999 Eastercon present this regurgitated reconvened quiz. Yes, they'll be selling memberships afterwards.

18:00 The Professionals

Participants: Chris Amies, Lisanne Norman, Cherith Baldry, Jo Walton (Moderator), Anne Gay
You're a fan. You've been published and paid. What's now different in your experience of being a fan, and your understanding of being a pro?

19:00 Dinner
Participants: Everybody
The Restaurant on the first floor - it's called the F-Plan diet.

20:00 TAFF MUST DIE!
Participants: Julian Headlong, Maureen Kincaid Speller, Victor Gonzalez, moderated by Sue Mason
Some people feel that the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund (TAFF) has outlived its purpose. Some people feel it's still an important part of fannish culture. TAFF hater Julian Headlong, TAFF winner Maureen Kincaid Speller and TAFF loser Victor Gonzalez discuss the issue moderated by the relatively neutral Sue Mason.

21:00 My Claire Lady
Participants: Ian Sorensen, Julia Daly, Linda Krawecke, Debbi Kerr, Chris O'Shea, Noel Collyer and the artist formerly known as Pat McMurray
Just when you thought it was safe to come back to Novacon, Ian Sorensen has risen from his crypt and given life to yet another travesty of a rock musical, aided by a cast of thousands, most of whom should have known better.

22:00 Fan Fund Auction - Something Different
Participants: Maureen Kincaid Speller and the Spellerettes.
This will be held in the Warwick (at the back of the Gloucester) if TAFF is still alive following the earlier item, something wonderful is going to happen, to raise money for TAFF, GUFF and other fannish good causes.

23:00 Bad Influence
Live music from a committee member and his band, but don't let that influence you.

23.45 James Henry's Disco
We promise, no canary yellow trousered DJs this year. Unsuitable comments about yellow submarines were edited out here...

00:15 Bad Influence Part Two

01.00 James Henry's Disco Part Two

SUNDAY

11:00 To Boldly Go

Participants: KIM Campbell and others.

We're promised that this will be an interesting presentation about the proposed bid for another UK Worldcon. Reminded of the ancient Chinese curse, we wait with baited breath.

12:00 Art Auction

Participants: Rog Peyton, Chris Morgan, 1/2r Cruttenden

You just know you've got a suitable space for that painting at home. Go on, go on, you know you want to.

13:00 Lunch

Participants: Everyone

The Restaurant on the first floor - I'll have what she's having.

14:00 The Nature of Science

Participants: Paul J McAuley, Dave Clements (Moderator), Amanda Baker

Is the modern template of science that of Pandora's Box, rather than that of Prometheus?

15:00 SF Foundation Relaunch

Participants: Caroline Mullan, Paul Kincaid and others

Over the past year the Friends of Foundation have been working towards a relaunch as the SF Foundation. For a large part of the past decade, saving the library has been a driving force behind FoF, and now that it is secure they can turn to other matters. This will be a sampler of the new plans - education, the journal, the Clarke Award, etc.

16:00 Turkey Basting

Participants: Julian Headlong, Graham Joyce, Mike Siddall, Carol Morton

You know how this works. You donate money to charity, we stop reading; you donate money to charity, we keep reading; you throw pounds at us and we grab them and hide under the table.

17:00 Awards Ceremony

Paul J McAuley, Martin Tudor, Committee, Award Winners, Gophers, Quiz Winners

It's nearly over. Come and see fanzine writers and artists be embarrassed, gophers be honoured and our guest be appreciated. We've worked hard, we've had fun, we've drunk too much.

18:00 Dinner

Participants: Everyone who is left.

This sitting of the Convention Menu will be served from in the Warwick on the ninth floor - best stoke up before you start drinking!

20:00 The International Beer Tasting

Participants: Tony Berry and whoever's left.

"Our beer which art in barrels,/ Hallowed be thy drink,/ Thy will be drunk, I will be drunk,/ At home as we are in the local./ Give us this day our daily ale,/ And forgive us our daily spillage/ As we forgive them that spillage against us./ Lead us not into temptation of Nitrokegs,/ And deliver us from Lagers and Alcopops./ For mine is the bitter, the mild and the porter,/ Forever and ever/ Barmen."

Now it's over. Goodbye. See you next year. Sayonara. Hasta la vista, baby.

Finally, we also have two workshops arranged: a Writer's Workshop by Graham Joyce on the Saturday, and a Presentation Workshop by John D Rickett. If you'd like to sign up, please contact us at pat@cooky.demon.co.uk or the convention address. If you have a workshop you'd like to run, please contact us with your suggestion.

[Please feel free to contact our programme organiser, Pat McMurray at pat@cooky.demon.co.uk or 28, Plaistow Grove, Bromley, KENT BR1 3PB.

[Pat McMurray is also responsible for The Memory Hole Annex an Archive and Repository of Convention Materials which can be viewed at http://www.cooky.demon.co.uk/index.html]

THE INTERNATIONAL BEER TASTING
by Martin Tudor

On Sunday night from 20.00 we will be hosting another in a long series of Novacon Beer Tastings. This year we are returning to the popular early format of BYOB (bring your own beer).

If you wish to take part you need to bring *at least* three bottles of your favourite British or foreign beer to the convention and check them in at the Novacon Registration desk on your arrival. In return you will receive a "BEER BADGE" which will entitle you to drink the beer at the Tasting on Sunday. (Please remember however, that although we have come to an arrangement with the Britannia regarding corkage for the Tasting this does not extend to you bringing

in your own supplies of drink. The Hotel can and will charge corkage to people smuggling food or drink into the hotel!)

If you cannot, for whatever reason, bring beers to the Tasting you can still take part by buying your BEER BADGE for £4.50 from Novacon Registration.

Please note that *all* Novacon members are welcome to attend the Tasting on Sunday. The convention is supplying an assortment of exotic and/or unusual non-alcoholic drinks at the Tasting, which will be free to all Novacon members, but please note that only those with BEER BADGES will be entitled to drink the beer.

To get the ball rolling the convention hopes to lay on two local beers on draught, Enville White and Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild, as well as a few interesting bottles - the rest is up to you! (For further information contact the Beer Tasting Organiser, Tony Berry, at 55 Seymour Road, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 4EP or e-mail me - martin@empties.demon.co.uk).

OPERATIONS

As we are sure most of you are aware Novacon, like most conventions in Britain, is run by volunteers and we can't have too many of them! So if you are willing to help out at the convention - anything from moving chairs to helping with tech ops or working on the programme, please contact our Ops Manager, Chris Murphy, at 126 McKean Road, Oldbury, B69 4BA, (e-mail CSHM@compu-serve.com), or volunteer at the Novacon Registration Table at the con.

WRITERS WORKSHOP by Graham Joyce

The writers' workshop will be conducted at 3pm on Saturday afternoon. Rather than bringing along previously written manuscripts, the participants will be invited to produce new material in the workshop.
The workshop will comprise:

1) An input on Narrative Structure from Graham
2) Writing exercises designed to refresh approaches to writing
3) The production of a short, tightly edited piece of writing for exhibition at the convention.

The convention will make available a PC/word-processing facility so that participants can type up and print short, complete pieces of writing.

Please try to read the short story Flowers For Algernon by Daniel Keyes, which will be referred to in the talk on Narrative Structure, along with the film BLADERUNNER.

PRESENTATION SKILLS WORKSHOP
by Pat McMurray

A presentation skills workshop sounds very formal and business like, but nothing could be further from our intentions. Communication is a very important part of fandom, and at conventions presentation and speaking skills are the core parts of public interaction. Such skills include being able to speak in a mike and be heard clearly, speaking without a mike, asking a question from the floor, leading a debate or chairing a panel, being able to present on your own and with support from others or from tools such as overhead projectors, flip charts and other visual aids.

John D Rickett (known to all as JDR) has a lot of experience in using such skills in both formal and informal situations. Those who had the pleasure to hear his Guest of Honour speech at Corflu UK this year will know he's a very good public speaker. He's also a regular and reliable moderator and an interesting panellist.

He hopes to lead a small group, no more than ten, in exploring such aspects of these skills as the group chooses, over the timescale that the group chooses. Starting with an initial get together in the main programme room (the Gloucester) at 10:00 on Saturday, the group will decide what to approach and when and where to do it over the weekend.

It will be an informal, small, friendly group. JDR is looking forward to spending some time on this. Whether your presentation skills are very great or barely beginning you should get a lot of benefit and fun out of this. We have no idea how much interest there will be in this workshop, and there are only ten places available, so perhaps best to contact us at the convention address to book a place in advance if you're interested.

FAIRYLAND by Paul J McAuley
Reviewed by Martin Tudor

FAIRYLAND features the main protagonist Alex. Alex is no mere gene hacker; he creates, splices, designs infective units of psychoactive viruses - but he gets in too deep with some nasty people and finds himself on the run with Milena, a twelve year-old girl who has been manufactured by a super-national company for reasons of their own.... *No, that doesn't cover it, er...*

FAIRYLAND is part of a sequence of near-future stories that includes "Prison Dreams", "Dr Luther's Assistant", "Children of the Revolution" and "Slaves"; and itself is comprised of three sections with dramatically different flavours "Edge Gliding", "Love Bombing" and "The Library of Dreams". All of them feature the artificially created creatures known as Dolls (or when they esvcape into the wild Fairies) *No, that isn't it either, too dry, er...*

FAIRYLAND is set in a chilling near-future world it opens with "Edge Gliding" as the western civilisation as we know it is falling apart, and by "Love Bombing" Alex is chasing after Milena through a western world which is virtually unrecogisable:

"In the Europe of the First World, most people enjoy a universal unearned wage and unlimited leisure in booming economies driven by new technologies that are making techniques of mass production, hardly changed since the days of Henry Ford, finally obsolete. They live at the edge of the old conurbations in ribbon arcologies, vast conglomerations of apartment complexes, leisure parks and shopping centres that are part built, part grown. More than fifty per cent of the population of First World Europe is over eighty, the baby boomer generation of the last century come into a post-Millennial paradise. Nanoechnology and gene therapy promises that at least half of them will live into their second century.

"But there's also the Europe of the Fourth World, the Europe of the dispossed, the people of the fringe. Half the population of the old Communist Bloc countries have been displaced by civil wars, and their numbers are swollen by refugees from the economic and ecological disasters in Africa, migrants who flock through Italy into the heart of Europe like swallows. They are uncountable, although tag and recapture methods used by UN relief estimate that refugees are roughly equal in number to the official population of Europe. Sometimes, especially in summer, it seems that all of Europe is on the move, a giantess restlessly but never quite waking, displacing and distorting the maps which cover her."

In "The Library of Dreams" Alex is hot on Milena's trail but all hell has broken loose as someone has created Fairyland - the Fairies themselves or someone else? War has broken out... *That's closer but....*

Nope. I'm afraid you're just going to have to read this one yourself!

ANCIENTS OF DAYS by Paul J McAuley
Reviewed by Martin Tudor

ANCIENTS OF DAYS is the second volume of a trilogy, the first volume CHILD OF THE RIVER was reviewed in Progress Report #3 and the final volume SHRINE OF STARS is scheduled to be published in September next year. The setting is the artificial world of Confluence which orbits an obscure star beyond the edge of the Galaxy. It is home to 10,000 races, shaped and raised to intelligence by the Preservers, god-like descendants of humanity who have abandoned Confluence and retreated from the Universe itself.

The hero of both volumes is Yamamanama, known as Yama, who was found as a baby on the breast of a dead woman in a white boat floating on the Great River. Yama's lineage is unknown - his race seems to have disappeared from Confluence - and so he sets out to find all he can of his forbears and to see if any of his race still survive.

In ANCIENTS OF DAYS many of the questions posed in CHILD OF THE RIVER are answered but, as you might expect, even more interesting questions are raised....

This is a strange, exotic novel - the atmosphere reminiscent, at times, of Joseph Conrad's claustrophobic works set in humid climes amongst strange peoples. But with the ntroduction of Angel, and the revelations of her incredible past, the novel's viewpoint changes to an incredible mind-bogglingly view of ten millin years of human history.

I eagerly await SHRINE OF STARS - not least so that I can settle down and read this whole magnificent work at a sitting.

NOT THE CRECHE: A BABY SITTING & CHILD MINDING SERVICE by Helena Bowles

Richard Standage, registered nurse working at the highly prestigious Birmingham Children's Hospital, and Helena Bowles, registered nurse at the totally non-prestigious Birmingham Heartlands hospital, will both be attending Novacon with their four-year-old son and one-year-old daughter.

Whilst government legislation decrees that they cannot provide a creche, both are willing to provide baby sitting/child minding on a privately arranged basis. This requires parents to contact them in advance on 0121-558-7591 (or in writing to 116 Shireland Road, Smethwick, Warley, West Midlands, B66 4QJ). They will be caring for their own, and any other children with whose parents a private arrangement has been reached, in an allocated suite in the hotel which will have a bed, a cot and a kettle. They recommend all children be supplied with a selection of carefully labelled favourite toys/books. Babies will require nappies and changing equipment in a carefully labelled bag. Recently potty trained children will require a change of underclothing and trousers or skirt.

Richard and Helena will be happy to feed babies/young children if milk and baby food is supplied. Baby milk/food must be in pre-packaged bottles, as refrigeration facilities may not be available.

As there is no charge made for this service, extra pairs of hands on a voluntary basis will be greatly appreciated.

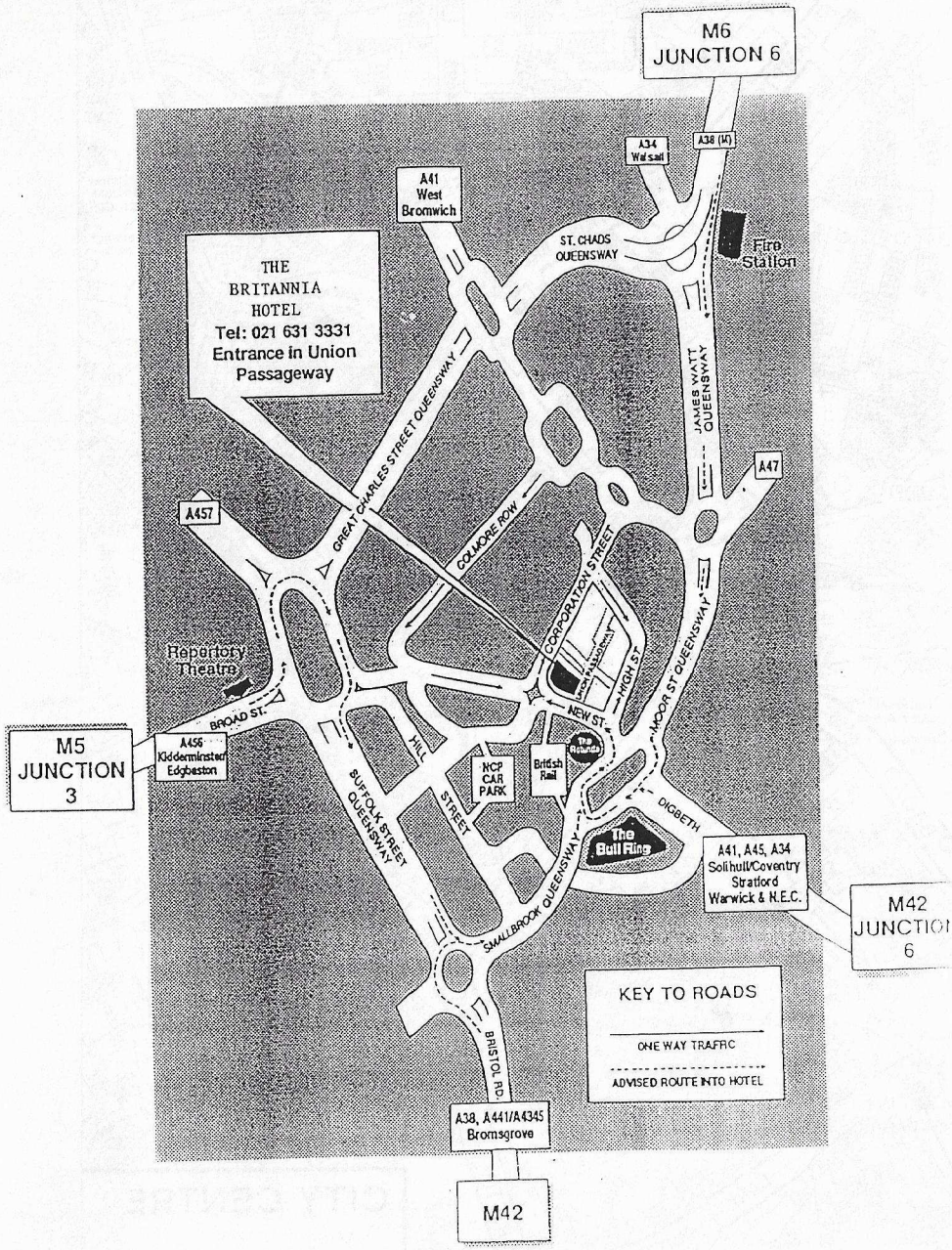
[Because this facility was not used last year we should mention that unless it is used this year we will not be offering it again. As ever, feedback is invited to Martin Tudor at 24 Ravensbourne Grove, (off Clarkes Lane,) Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 1HX or via e-mail martin@empties.demon.co.uk.]

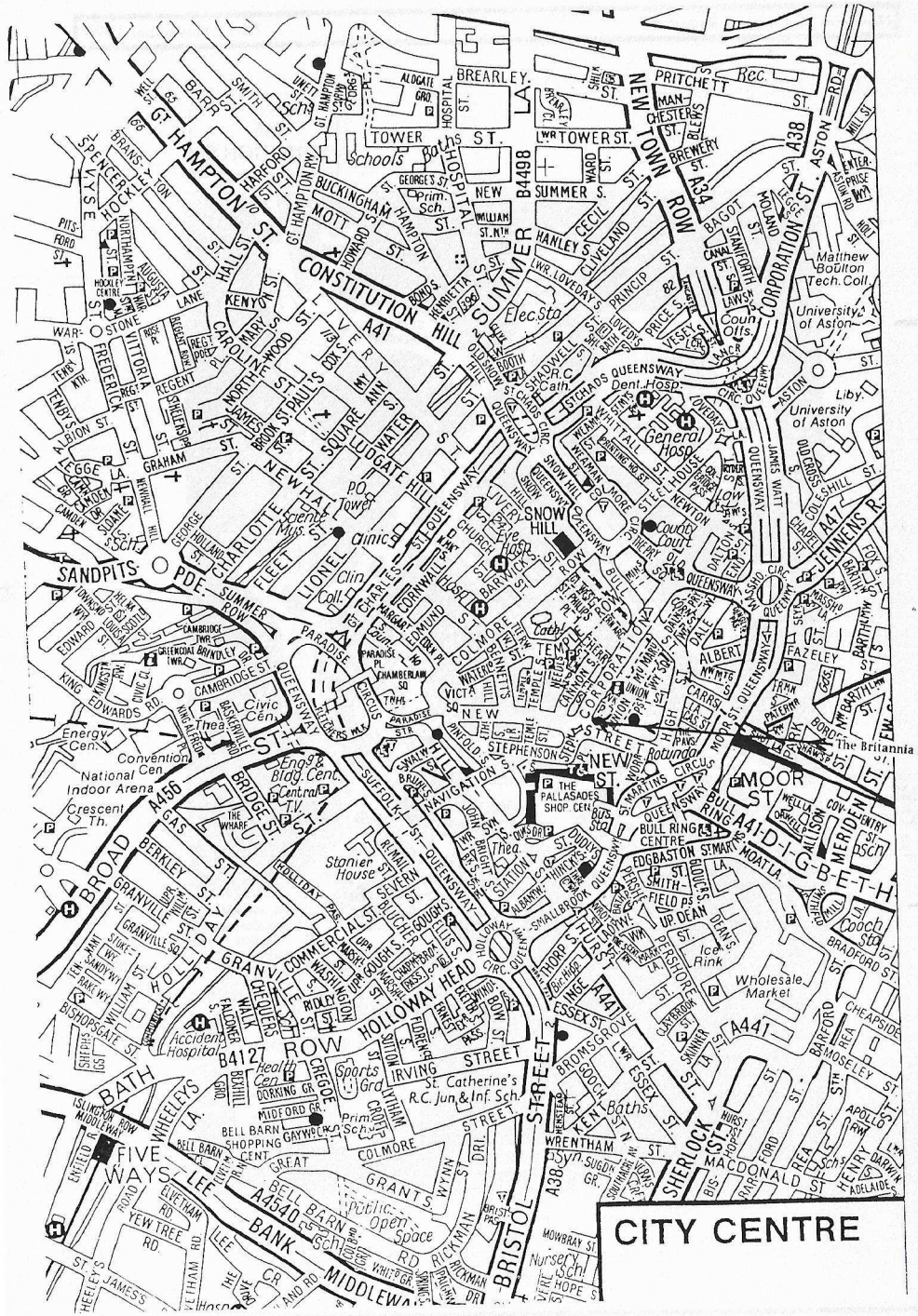
THE NOVA AWARDS

Enclosed with this Progress Report you should have received a copy of the 1998 Nova Awards Ballot. Please return this form to: Tony Berry, The Nova Administrator, 55 Seymour Road, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 4EP at least one week before Novacon 28, or post it in the ballot box provided on the Novacon registration desk at the convention before midnight on the Saturday.

As an aide-memoir on the back of the ballot there is a list of the eligible fanzines received (or seen) by the Nova Awards Administrator during the period 1st of October 1997 and the 30th of September 1998.

If you have any enquiries about the Novas or you want a copy of the Rules (50p to cover copying and postage), contact Tony Berry at 55 Seymour Road, Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 4EP.


M6
JUNCTION 6
A34
Walsall
A38 (M)
A41
West
Bromwich
ST. CHADS
QUEENSWAY
Fire
Station
THE
BRITANNIA
HOTEL
Tel: 021 631 3331
Entrance in Union
Passageway
JAMES WATT
QUEENSWAY
A47
A457
GREAT CHARLES STREET QUEENSWAY
COLMORE ROW
CORPORATION STREET
HIGH ST
MOOR ST QUEENSWAY
Repertory
Theatre
BROAD ST.
NEW ST
M5
JUNCTION
3
A456
Kidderminster
Edgbaston
HILL
STREET
NCP
CAR
PARK
British
Rail
The
Rotunda
SUFFOLK STREET
QUEENSWAY
DIGBETH
The
Bull Ring
A41, A45, A34
Solihull/Coventry
Stratford
Warwick & N.E.C.
M42
JUNCTION
6
SMALLBROOK QUEENSWAY
KEY TO ROADS
ONE WAY TRAFFIC
ADVISED ROUTE INTO HOTEL
BRISTOL RD.
A38, A441/A4345
Bromsgrove
M42


CITY CENTRE
The Britannia Hotel
University of Aston
Matthew Boulton Tech. Coll.
Coun. Offs.
Elec. Sta.
General Hosp.
County Court
Law Cts.
Rotunda
Wholesale Market
Ice Rink
Accident Hospital
Health Cen.
Sports Grd.
Public Open Space
Nursery Sch.
Bell Barn Shopping Cent.
Civic Cen.
Energy Cen.
Convention Cen.
National Indoor Arena
Crescent Th.
Eng. & Bldg. Cent.
Central TV
Stonier House
Thea.
Schools
Baths
Prim. Sch.
Clin. Coll.
Scientific Mus.
Clinic
P.O. Tower
Liby.
Dent. Hosp.
Eye Hosp.
Cath.
Syn.
Mus.
Bus. Sta.
Ind. Hosp.
Coach Sta.
Gt. Hampton St.
Constitution Hill
Summer Row
New Town Row
Corporation St.
Bristol St.
Broad St.
Bath Row
Holloway Head
Bull Ring
Moor St.
Navigation St.
Colmore Row
Hagley Rd.
Bromsgrove St.
Sandpits
Five Ways
Lee Bank Middleway
Aston Expy.
Jennens Rd.
Meriden Rd.
Dalton Rd.
Lionel St.
Charlotte St.
Fleet St.
Ludgate Hill
Newhall St.
Graham St.
Frederick St.
Carrs Lane
Pritchett St.
Brearley St.
Tower St.
Hockley Hill
Spencer St.
Hockley Hill
Gt. Hampton Rw.
Buckingham St.
Mott St.
Hampton St.
Hall St.
Kenyon St.
Carlyle St.
Cox St.
Ann St.
Square St.
Brook St.
Cambridge St.
Edward St.
Paradise St.
Chamberlain Sq.
Victoria Sq.
Colmore Row
Great Colmore St.
Grant St.
Wynn St.
Bell Barn Rd.
Yew Tree Rd.
Lee Bank Middleway
Holloway Head
Commercial St.
Granville St.
Holliday St.
Berkley St.
Bishopsgate St.
Falconer Walk
Irving St.
Cregoe St.
Dorking Gr.
Midford Gr.
Gaywell Gr.
Wrentham St.
Sherlock St.
Macdonald St.
Essex St.
Bromsgrove St.
Bordesley St.
Cheapside
Bradford St.
Moseley St.
Moat La.
Edgbaston St.
Smithfield
Bull Ring Centre
The Pallasades Shop. Cen.
Navigation St.
Stephenson St.
Suffolk St.
Queensway
Snow Hill
Steelhouse Ln.
Newton St.
Queensway
Corporation St.
Aston Rd.
Lionel St.
Charlotte St.
Fleet St.
Ludgate Hill
Newhall St.
Graham St.
Frederick St.
Carrs Lane
Pritchett St.
Brearley St.
Tower St.
Hockley Hill
Spencer St.
Hockley Hill
Gt. Hampton Rw.
Buckingham St.
Mott St.
Hampton St.
Hall St.
Kenyon St.
Carlyle St.
Cox St.
Ann St.
Square St.
Brook St.
Cambridge St.
Edward St.
Paradise St.
Chamberlain Sq.
Victoria Sq.
Colmore Row
Great Colmore St.
Grant St.
Wynn St.
Bell Barn Rd.
Yew Tree Rd.
Lee Bank Middleway
Holloway Head
Commercial St.
Granville St.
Holliday St.
Berkley St.
Bishopsgate St.
Falconer Walk
Irving St.
Cregoe St.
Dorking Gr.
Midford Gr.
Gaywell Gr.
Wrentham St.
Sherlock St.
Macdonald St.
Essex St.
Bromsgrove St.
Bordesley St.
Cheapside
Bradford St.
Moseley St.
Moat La.
Edgbaston St.
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Newton St.
Queensway
Corporation St.
Aston Rd.

HOW TO GET THERE BY CAR
by Tony Berry

From the M6: Get off at J6 and follow the A38(M) (Aston Expressway) towards Birmingham city centre. Eventually, you'll go down an underpass and then see a bit of daylight before going down a second longer underpass which bears round to the left. On resurfacing, exit left off the main drag and go down to Holloway Circus. (You'll pass the new Andromeda). Turn left into Smallbrook Queensway. Take the first left again into Hill Street. About 100 yards along you'll see the main entrance to the Pallasades car park on your right. (£9.00 for 24 hours.) If you're feeling brave you could try for the top entrance, which may get you a little nearer to New Street. Continue along Hill Street and go right at the lights into Navigation Street. You then have to bear left up Pinfold Street and round to the right back down to Navigation Street. The car park entrance is in front of you. Careful how you cross the traffic.

From the M5: Probably best to leave at J3 and follow the A456 towards Birmingham. This brings you on to the Hagley Road which you then follow all the way to Five Ways (Edgbaston Shopping Centre and the Swallow Hotel on your right). Go down the underpass onto Broad Street and along past the I.C.C. Go right round Paradise Circus and along Suffolk Street (A38) then directions as above.

(Please note that if you wish to unload at the Hotel before parking your car you can do so using one of the two Britannia Hotel parking bays on New Street beside Boots/Union Passage. For further details see Pat McMurray's piece on WHEELCHAIR ACCESS below.)

HOW TO GET THERE BY TRAIN OR COACH
by Martin Tudor

By Train: First ensure that you book your ticket to Birmingham New Street and *not* Birmingham International Station.

Leave New Street Station via the escalators, which are facing you as you enter the main concourse from the platforms. These escalators will take you up into the Pallasades Shopping Centre. At the top turn left and make your way out of the Shopping Centre. Walk down the ramp past McDonalds to the bottom

where the Midland Bank is on your right. At the Midland Bank look across the street and to your right, across the road, you will see the Britannia Hotel.

Cross over New Street and walk down towards Boots, the main entrance to the Britannia is in a small alleyway called Union Passage.

By Coach: You will arrive at Digbeth Coach Station, leave the station on to the road called Digbeth and turn left. Walk up the hill to the Bull Ring Centre, continue through the Market and turn right, walking up the ramp, towards New Street (and the Rotunda). Walk through the short subway to the steps leading to New Street, at the top of these steps the Rotunda Branch of Lloyds Bank will be on your left. Turn right and cross at the lights, then go left up New Street past BHS and Boots to the alleyway called Union Passage turn right and you'll be facing the main entrance to the Britannia.

Any problems on the day call the Britannia Hotel on 0121 631 3331.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS
by Pat McMurray

From St Martins Circus, Queensway, you will see an exit to the High Street sign-posted "New St Hotels Loading Area". Take this road, and turn immediately left into New Street. (You cannot continue up the High Street, as it's a pedestrian-ised area).

The Britannia Hotel is on your right, at first floor level above Etams. Look for the blue Britannia flags. The disabled parking bay is immediately on your right as you enter New Street, about 150 metres before the hotel. As far as we can find out, there is no time limit on the disabled bays, providing you have a disabled sticker. This disabled bay has space for four cars.

There are loading bays closer to the hotel, in front of Etams and Boots. You can park there to unload, but even a disabled sticker may not save you from the wrath of Birmingham's Traffic Wardens. A 30 minute stay while you unload should be fine. The hotel recommend that you ask one of their porters to keep an eye on your car while you unload. However there should be dealers etc., unloading there for most of Friday afternoon.

If you would prefer to leave your car in covered parking once you've unloaded, or if the disabled bays are full, we've arranged parking for £9.00 per day in the Pallasades carpark. See directions above for getting to there.

The entrance to the hotel is up an alleyway called Union Passage, underneath the Britannia sign. The alleyway slopes at about one to twenty.

The main entrance comprises a revolving door, leading to a small landing at the top of three stairs down to the ground floor reception. There is also a fire exit which can be opened from the inside, which leads to the same small landing. It appears possible to get an ordinary manual or powered wheelchair through the fire exit onto the landing. The hotel have a ramp for the three steps which they will lay down for the weekend. The fire exits are alarmed, but we'll ask them to switch the alarm off for the weekend. In the nature of things they will almost certainly forget to do these things, and switch the alarms on and take the ramp up at every shift changeover, but we shall do our best.

If you have a scooter or large trolley which cannot get through the fire exit, the revolving door can be completely folded back to allow very good access. I have been shown how to do this, and intend to train every gopher and anyone else who's interested in it, how to do it. The hotel have shown every sign of being helpful and friendly, but best to be prepared. I would expect that the ramp will be down and the doors open most of Friday afternoon as the dealers come in and out as well.

The hotel has 11 floors - ground floor reception, Mezzanine bar area, which we probably won't use, first floor restaurant which we will use, second floor main con bar, dealer's room, OPs and registration, eighth floor workshops, ninth floor artshow, smaller bar and programme room. All other floors are bedrooms and there are bedrooms on the second and eighth floor as well.

There are three lifts to each floor - two public lifts and one staff lift. There are also fire escape stairs between all floors and public stairs between the ground, mezzanine and first floors. Both public lifts and all public rooms appear both wheelchair and scooter accessible. We've calculated that it will take ten minutes for the entire membership to travel by lift from the second to the ninth floor - we have fifteen minute intervals between most programme items. The staff lift can be used by the membership, but appears very difficult for wheelchair access - I'd stick to the public lifts.

All the public areas on each floor are flat, with no stairs. Many of the doors are on springs and may prove difficult to open without assistance. Most entrances to public rooms are double doored and will be left open where possible. The artshow and dealers room appear large enough that they should not be crowded and manoeuvring should be reasonable.

The hotel has certain bedrooms they provide to people with access difficulties. None of them are fully accessible. All the bedroom doors are standard width, but they can remove the bathroom doors, if requested. I would suggest contacting the hotel in advance to make doubly sure they are aware of any potential difficulties. I believe wheelchairs will be able to get into the rooms, but I don't think scooters will be able to. It should be possible to get the hotel to take care of a scooter and recharge it overnight.

If you have any further questions please feel free to contact me, Pat McMurray, on 07775 803 297 or the Britannia Hotel on 0121 631 3331. I hope the above is of some assistance.

Novacon 28 Attending Members from last Progress Report until 1st November 1998

216 Andrew Wilson
217 Lorna McLaren
218 Margaret Austin
219 Martin Easterbrook
220 K.I.M. Campbell
221 Cherith Baldry
222 Mark McCann
223 Margaret Hall
224 Richard James
225 Les Heasman
226 Tanya Brown
227 Liam Proven
228 Dave Wood
229 Eira Latham
230 S.M.S.
231 Robert Sneddon
232 Erhard Leder
233 John Brosnan
234 Felix Cohen
235 Michael Grant
236 Fran Dowd
237 John Dowd
238 Alan Johnson
239 Katie Kary
240 Adam Leci
241 Del Cotter
242 Chris Baker
243 Rachel Baker
244 Sadie Plant
245 Jo Walton
246 Kit Bathgate
247 James Odell
248 T Derwin
249 Kathy Westhead
250 Mike Westhead
251 Peter Westhead
252 Karen Westhead
253 Vincent Docherty
254 Justina Robson